

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 11, 17, and 18 as follows:

1. (Withdrawn) A method for preparing a substantially pure tissue graft composition comprising basement membrane of warm-blooded vertebrate liver tissue, said method comprising the steps of

partially hydrolyzing the liver tissue by contacting the tissue with an aqueous composition comprising an exogenous protease;

washing the liver tissue with an aqueous detergent composition comprising a non-denaturing detergent;

removing the non-denaturing detergent; and

washing the liver tissue with an aqueous composition comprising a denaturing detergent substantially free of non-denaturing detergent.

2. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of slicing the liver tissue into sheets or strips before the liver tissue is hydrolyzed with the protease.

3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2 wherein the liver tissue is sliced into sheets or strips having a thickness of up to about 2000 μ .

4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of digesting the pure tissue graft composition with an enzyme composition for a period of time sufficient to solubilize at least a portion of the liver basement membrane.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 4 wherein the tissue graft composition is digested with an enzyme composition for a period of time sufficient to form a liver basement membrane solution.

6. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 5 further comprising the step of adjusting the pH to about 5.0 to about 9.0 to form a gel.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the protease is trypsin.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the non-denaturing detergent is selected from the group consisting of polyoxyethylene ethers, 3-[(3-cholamidopropyl dimethylammonio]-1-propane-sulfonate, nonylphenoxy polyethoxy ethanol, polyoxyethylenesorbitans, sodium lauryl sarcosinate, and alkyl glucosides including C₈-C₉ alkyl glucoside.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the denaturing detergent is selected from the group consisting of deoxycholate and sodium dodecylsulfate.

10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of mechanically dissociating cells and cell fragments from the liver basement membrane.

11. (Currently Amended) A liver basement membrane graft composition comprising basement membrane of warm-blooded vertebrate liver tissue, wherein the liver basement membrane is substantially free of DNA and the liver basement membrane is prepared by the a method of claim 1, comprising the steps of

partially hydrolyzing the liver tissue by contacting the tissue with an aqueous composition comprising an exogenous protease;

washing the liver tissue with an aqueous detergent composition comprising a non-denaturing detergent;

removing the non-denaturing detergent; and

washing the liver tissue with an aqueous composition comprising a denaturing detergent substantially free of non-denaturing detergent.

12. (Original) The composition of claim 11 wherein the liver basement membrane is fluidized.

13. (Original) The composition of claim 11 wherein the liver basement membrane is in a gel form.

14. (Original) The composition of claim 11 wherein the liver basement membrane is dried and is in powder form.

15. (Original) The composition of claim 11 wherein the liver basement membrane is substantially free of cells of the warm-blooded vertebrate.

16. (Withdrawn) A method for inducing the formation of endogenous tissue at a site in need of endogenous tissue growth in a warm blooded vertebrate, said method comprising implanting the graft composition of claim 11 comprising basement membrane of liver tissue of a warm-blooded vertebrate in an amount effective to induce endogenous tissue growth at the site of administration of the graft composition.

17. (Currently amended) A liver tissue derived composition for supporting the growth of a cell population, said composition comprising the liver basement membrane composition of claim 11 wherein the liver basement membrane composition of claim 11 is devoid of source liver tissue endogenous cells; and

added nutrients to support the growth of said cell population *in vitro*.

18. (Currently amended) A liver tissue derived composition for supporting the growth of a cell population, said composition comprising culture-ware coated with a matrix comprising the liver basement membrane composition of claim 11 wherein the liver basement membrane composition of claim 11 is devoid of source liver tissue endogenous cells.